

Appendix E -Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

This appendix contains those questions raised by those schools and third-party providers who conducted beta reviews of this technical reference and in particular, the Implementation Guide. More questions will be added as they arise.

Question #1

With the elimination of Special Disbursements, will filling in the payment period information on all disbursement records cause errors and edits?

Answer: The only edit that will be performed on the Payment Period Start Date is to ensure the value is a valid date. If it is not a valid date RFMS will blank out the value. RFMS editing will be performed only with schools who become ineligible or closed during the award year.

Question #2

Why are the left margins of the technical reference left blank and all text moved over to the right side of the page?

Answer: This is the style design of technical references approved by the Department of Education. It allows space for the user to add notes in the left margin.

Question #3

Is the Pell Grant Web site an http or https?

Answer: The Federal Pell Grant Web site is
<http://www.pellgrantsonline.ed.gov>

Question #4

Won't the way the "D" for duplicate status code is being implemented in edits 331 and 430 cause problems and produce results inconsistent with the text descriptions of the edits? Edit 331 doesn't make sense for a duplicate—it is a test for a different student! Edit 430 calls a disbursement a duplicate if the reference number has been used before. Shouldn't the edit only be set to "D" if the date and amount are also the same? If the reference number is a repeat, but the date and amount are different, shouldn't this be an "E" for error/reject?

Answer: Edit 331 is the same edit as 302. The only difference is that edit 331 starts with the Award Year 2001-2002 and sets the status code to "D" for duplicate. If all of the fields on the origination record are submitted with the same value, RFMS returns the record as a duplicate. For the disbursement record only the disbursement reference number needs to be evaluated for the duplicate. Unlike origination records where a change can be submitted by sending in the new data with the old data, if a disbursement amount needs to be corrected, a disbursement record with a new disbursement reference number must be submitted.

Question #5

Can the specs be reviewed and can someone determine if "nonnumeric" is being used correctly? Many uses of the word "nonnumeric" in the specifications imply all characters when what is meant is any character. For example, "positions 1-9 of the Student ID are nonnumeric" should really say "Any position in 1-9 of the Student ID is nonnumeric." There is similar wording in the Pell ID.

Answer: This will be reviewed.

Question #6

How many times are Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA) letters electronically transmitted through SAIG per cycle for all participating Federal Pell Grant Schools?

Answer: The ACA letters are generated at least three times a year and can be run more often at the request of ED.

Question #7

Is the sort order listed in Data Requisition section of the Implementation Guide of the RFMS Technical Reference correct? If it is, the specs will need to be changed. Name only would not correctly sort activity for multiple students with the same name like “Smith John.”

Answer: The sort order is on name and Social Security Number. Therefore, if there are multiple “Smith John” records these would have a secondary sort on the Social Security Number which should be unique for each “Smith John.”

Question #8

Can eligibility come and go during an award year?

Answer: Yes, eligibility can come and go during an award year. ED determines eligibility. A school can have multiple periods of eligibility and ineligibility during an award year.

Question #9

Do rejected transactions reverse accepted student level detail?

Answer: Rejected transactions do not reverse the accepted student detail. A rejected transaction is not processed by RFMS, so what is already in the database is not changed or updated by a rejected transaction.

Question #10

Can RFMS perform percentile rounding?

Answer: RFMS performs percentile rounding that checks for schools using whole dollar disbursements. For example, if the year is \$3125, \$1562 or \$1563 is rounded as 50.0000% instead of calculating 49.98% or 50.02%.

If an award amount is submitted with pennies on the Origination Award record, RFMS will truncate the pennies sent in on the Origination record. When RFMS calculates the Total Payment Ceiling, if the amount is greater than \$.00, it will be rounded up to the next whole dollar amount before comparing it to the reported Award Amount. For disbursement amounts, the calculations are carried out to 15 places during the calculation and then after the last step, the amount is rounded to pennies.

Question #11

Is the Federal Pell Grant Web site a secure Web site?

Answer: The information on the Pell Grant Web site is secured if the information is covered by the Privacy Act. When first entering the Web site the data that is not covered by the Privacy Act is available to the public. If the information is covered by the Privacy Act such as Social Security Numbers then the user is required to have a Logon ID and can access the data after logging into the Web site.

Question #12

Is "Payment Methodology" in "Enrollment Status?"

Answer: No. The valid value for Payment Methodology is dependent on the accepted value for Academic Calendar. The valid value for Enrollment Status is dependent on the accepted values for Payment Methodology and Academic Calendar.

Question #13

For Edit Code 422, is a non-reimbursement school allowed to send a date without getting an error? Edit Code 422 is currently shown as a warning message.

Answer: As long as the value for the Payment Period Start Date is a valid date and within the range of accepted values for 2001-2002 then edit 422 will not be set.

Question #14

Will RFMS continue to drop the first batch and reject the second as a duplicate if the same batch is sent twice and picked up in the same sweep? CPS had understood earlier that the first would be processed and the second would be rejected for being a duplicate, but this has not been the case.

Answer: The first batch will be processed and then the second will be rejected as a duplicate.

Question #15

When will Pell Payment Tables be available for 2001-2002?

Answer: It is estimated that the 2001-2002 Pell Payment Tables were available in late December 2000.

Question #16

When can schools/servicers start requesting the PGTX file? How many times can they request one? Is this the new Reconciliation Tool?

Answer: The PGTX file is used by RFMS to send a school/servicer information in a flat text file. This format has been used for 1999-2000 to send out reconciliation data. For 2001-2002 the Reconciliation file can be requested using a Data Request. The data will be returned to the school with a message class of PGRC02OP and be in a formatted layout. Please refer to the Record Layouts for the format.

Question #17

Is it possible to include a quick reference abbreviation key and glossary? There are lots of acronyms and terms that can be confusing.

Answer: A Glossary has been included as Appendix A of the RFMS Technical Reference and a List of acronyms and abbreviations is included as Appendix B.

Question #18

Will any RFMS System Generated Batches be sent as #G again? This is not currently listed in the Pell Message Classes list.

Answer: The System Generated Batches will have the Batch IDs begin with #G and will be returned in the Disbursement message class of PGDA02OP.

Question #19

Will Verification 'W' batches/warnings still be sent out?

Answer: Verification 'W' warning letters will be sent out to inform schools of the students who have disbursements and have a Verification 'W' status.

Question #20

Will RFMS reject Disbursement Records if JIT or Advance Funded Schools enter dates in the Payment Period dates?

Answer: RFMS will NOT reject the records if a Payment Period Start date is included. If the value is not the valid date format or is out of the range then the date will be blanked out by RFMS.

Question #21

Can RFMS now send out Batch Replacements?

Answer: RFMS cannot send out Batch Replacements. Since RFMS does not keep rejected records, batch integrity cannot be maintained in creating the batch replacement. This option was removed in 2000-2001.

Question #22

Can an Academic Calendar/Payment Methodology Reference Chart also be included in the Implementation Guide? Perhaps something similar to the Express Help Text, only more user friendly?

Answer: The Pell Grant Calculation tables are included in the Award Year Specific section of the Implementation Guide.

Question #23

For formulas used to calculate funding, can an example for Clock Hour Schools be provided in the Implementation Guide?

Answer: An example for each Payment Methodology is included in the Pell Grant Calculation tables located in the Award Year Specific section of the Implementation Guide.

Question #24

Will RFMS be tracking the estimated disbursement dates this year? RFMS did not do this for 99-00 and 00-01.

Answer: The estimated disbursement dates are stored in RFMS. Only the first estimated disbursement date is required on the Origination record.

Question #25

For Potential Overaward, will the last disbursement record be blocked or will the disbursement amounts just keep getting reduced to \$0?

Answer: The amount will be reduced to \$0 and the disbursement record will be rejected. The disbursement record will also include the edits to indicate that the student is in a Potential Overaward situation.

Question #26

In the Implementation Guide, in the section on origination modifications, you say that the 3-position sequence number field will help schools to track which version of the origination record RFMS has on file. Are you referring to software “version”? If not, version of what?

Answer: The sequence number field can be used to track which version of the origination record the school is using. Some schools keep a history of all origination records that the school sends to RFMS. The sequence number is a way for the school to know which of their versions is on the RFMS database.

Question #27

If the Version Number field in the batch header record is blank, then no edit will be performed. The version number is a warning, and if the version number field contains a version number, then an edit will be performed—Does this only refer to EDEExpress versions?

Answer: If there is a value in the field it will be evaluated against the most recent EDEExpress version number.

Question #28

Will RFMS look at each field in the Disbursement Record or just the Reference Number?

Answer: To determine a duplicate RFMS will only look at the Disbursement Reference Number.

Question #29

As stated in the business rules, schools are not limited by the number of disbursements they report in the accepted Origination Record—Does this refer to ‘number of Payment Periods’ field that was removed from the Origination Record or the Estimated Disbursement Dates?

Answer: This refers to the Estimated Disbursement Dates listed on the origination record.

Question #30

If a record is rejected, should the 'Accepted Amount' be \$0 since \$0 was accepted?

Answer: If a record is rejected then the Accepted Amount will contain the original amount that was sent in on the record. All of the original values will be returned on a rejected record.

Question #31

Why is Edit Code 222 a warning and not a reject?

Answer: Edit 222 is a warning because each record in the batch will be evaluated to determine the eligibility status of the institution at the time the disbursement was made.

Question #32

Which of the following numbers is unique to a school? DUNS Number or OPEID Number?

Answer: OPEID.

Question #33

A disbursement situation occurred that I think the business rules should address. A disbursement was submitted one day. The next day the check was voided and reissued for the 1st disbursement that was already submitted. RFMS acknowledged the first disbursement. The next day, when the negative is submitted for the void and the disbursement was submitted for the re-issued check, RFMS rejected the disbursement first because it exceeded the total award for the student. RFMS then accepted the negative for the void, which reduced the total disbursed amount to zero. The total should have been the amount of the one disbursement. Is it because the disbursement was received a second before the negative void or does RFMS always read the positive before the negative void when received at the same time? Can this be addressed somewhere for how schools should handle submitting data?

Answer: RFMS processes the records in the order they are received in the file. For the situation above if the second positive record was in the batch before the negative record then the positive record would have been rejected and the negative record accepted. If the records are included in

the file in the order that the activity was taken then they should be accepted correctly at RFMS.

Question #34

Will RFMS adjust the school amount to its maximum calculated amount?

Answer: If the school amount is less than the calculated amount, RFMS does nothing to the school amount. If the calculated amount is less than the school amount, RFMS reduces the school amount to the calculated amount.

Question #35

What is the record type code of MRR?

Answer: The following are the type codes for the MRR.

CE	Only Potential Concurrent Enrollment
PB	Only Potential Overaward Project (POP) and Blocked Institution
PR	Only Potential Overaward Project (POP) and Blocker Institution
BC	Both 'CE' and 'PB'
RC	Both 'CE' and 'PR'
PU	Unblocked

Question #36

Advance Funded schools receive ESOAs, but what about Just-In-Time Schools?

Answer: All schools receive ESOAs. Advance funded schools receive them when their obligations exceed their authorization amount. Just-in-Time schools receive them every time a disbursement batch is accepted because they do not have an initial authorization amount.

Question #37

What is the difference between the SAIG Transmission Header and Trailer and the Grant Batch Header and Trailer records?

Answer: The SAIG Transmission Header and Trailer are used by the SAIG network in transmitting the files. The Grant Batch Header and Trailer records are used by RFMS to ensure the complete batch has been received and to identify the type of data contained in the batch.

Question #38

Who determines if the sum of all accepted and pending disbursements exceeds the recipient's Scheduled Federal Pell Grant Award by calculating the percentage of disbursements received at all attending campuses?

Answer: RFMS determines this when a disbursement record is accepted. The percentage is calculated at each attended campus and then the percentages are summed to determine if it is over 100 percent.

Question #39

If a school sends a record, and if any of the identification fields do not match the identifier fields on a previously accepted origination record—wouldn't this record come back with a reject of 303 or 324 for aid year 2002 or beyond, and not accepted as a new record (unless by accidentally matching on another student SSN)?

Answer: If the identifier fields (Origination ID) do not have an accepted origination record at RFMS then the origination record is treated as a new record. Edits 303 and 324 pertain to matching the data on the record to the Applicant record received from the Central Processing System (CPS) or matching the SSN and Name code fields on the record to the Origination ID on the record.

Question #40

Do the disbursement reference numbers have to be in sequential order?

Answer: No. The disbursement reference number can be submitted in any order.

Question #41

Edit Code 324 indicates Invalid Name Code in the year specific edit codes, but in the edit codes tables it indicates “Invalid Expected Family Contribution”. Which is correct?

Answer: For 2001-2002, “Invalid Name Code” is correct and tables have been changed to reflect this.

Question #42

Why is there no Edit Code 611 for the Edit Codes and What They Really Mean tables?

Answer: Edit Code 611 (Invalid Reconciliation Student ID) has been added to the “Edit Codes and What They Really Mean” table.

Question #43

What does the “TG” in TG Number mean?

Answer: The TG number is the naming convention assigned by GEIS, the owner of the EDE network mailbox. It does not have any other significant meaning.

Question #44

Can an example be provided for Concurrent Enrollment vs. POP?
Recipients can't be paid from 2 schools during the same period.

Answer: Recipients can be paid within the same timeframe as long as the maximum Scheduled Award has not been exceeded. Concurrent enrollment is set when a student has more than one origination record for the award year at RFMS. There are disbursements on both origination records and the enrollment dates are within 30 days of each other.

For the example below, School A is sending in a disbursement of \$100 on each student.

Student	School	Enrollment Date	Total Disb	Maximum Award	Eligible Used	Total Eligible	Conditions Set
1	A	09/01/2001	\$1000	3300	30.30	60.60	Concurrent Enrollment
1	B	09/15/2001	\$1000	3300	30.30	60.60	Concurrent Enrollment
2	A	09/01/2001	\$2000	3300	60.61	100.00	Concurrent Enrollment, POP
2	B	09/15/2001	\$1300	3300	39.39	100.00	Concurrent Enrollment, POP
3	A	09/01/2001	\$500	3300	15.15	30.30	None
3	B	10/30/2001	\$500	3300	15.15	30.30	None
4	A	09/01/2001	\$1000	2300	43.48	73.78	Concurrent
4	B	09/15/2001	\$1000	3300	30.30	73.78	Concurrent Enrollment
5	A	09/01/2001	\$2000	2500	80.00	100.00	Concurrent Enrollment, POP
5	B	09/15/2001	\$660	3300	20.20	100.00	Concurrent Enrollment, POP
6	A	09/01/2001	\$500	1000	50.00	30.30	None
6	B	10/30/2001	\$500	1300	38.46	30.30	None